Can Labels Shape Brands? A Qualitative Review of Brand Perception in Relation to Voluntary Front-of-Package Food Labels

Kate Galloway

University of Minnesota

School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Capstone Paper

July 26, 2017

Table of Contents

About the Author

Kate Galloway has been in the fields of marketing and communications for over 15 years. She has worked in a variety of industries from the entertainment and consumer packaged goods businesses to agriculture and environmental science. Two of her areas of expertise collided when she noticed a marked shift in the food labeling information provided to and demanded by consumers, and also heard rumblings from agricultural insiders about their frustrations with front-of-package labels and related negative outcomes. Interested in gaining perspective that could be useful for agriculture and food brands alike, consumer brand perception in relation to food labels became the inspiration for her Capstone research.

Kate would like to thank her husband, Charlie, and daughter, Simone, for supporting her through the late nights, missed events and general moodiness associated with the combination of full-time work and school. She is grateful to her University of Minnesota professors and adjunct faculty for their wealth of knowledge and helpful feedback. Graduate school could not have been possible for Kate had it not been for the support and encouragement from Padilla, whom she thanks for over four wonderful years of employment. She is indebted to Karla Zellmer for her editing brilliance. And last, but not least, Kate is forever grateful to Cohort 11 for their love, support, friendship and laughter.

Abstract

Food products in today's grocery shopping environments include a higher volume of voluntary labeling and information-sharing than seen in the past. Though the FDA requires only a few basic facts to be listed on the front of food packaging, brands have increasingly used this valuable real estate to tout benefits, display marketing messages or implement creative design to influence purchase decision. The messages can include ingredient information such, as "made with real sugar" or "gluten free," or brands may also include quality messages, such as "no preservatives" and "all natural." Some labels inform the consumer about nutrition, such as "two cups of vegetables in every serving" or "essential 13g protein per serving," and some messages provide source information, such as "free trade," "pasture grazed," or "organic." This information is provided to help consumers make informed food choices, but has the additional potential to influence brand perceptions. Through in-depth interviews with household grocery decision-makers, qualitative information was gathered on questions like - do consumers compare brands based on Front-of-Package (FOP) food labeling? How might FOP labeling reflect positively or negatively on a consumer's perception of a brand? The study found that, ultimately, FOP labeling did not directly influence brand perception in a significant way. What participants found to be most important in choosing brands was on the basis of previous experience, sourcing or speculation around price.

Keywords: Front-of-package labeling, FOP, brand perception, nutrition information, food labels, food labeling, grocery labeling, nutritional labels

Can Labels Shape Brands? A Qualitative Review of Brand Perception in Relation to Front-of-Package Food Labels

Marketing and communication leaders in agriculture companies and associations have experienced figurative heartburn over certain voluntary front-of-package (FOP) food labels in grocery stores and other commercial food retailers. Conversations around the topic reveal the general worry is: brands that choose to not include excess FOP food labeling may lose sales if the consumer is comparing one FOP label to the next (Messer, et al., 2015; Roe & Teisl, 2007). One prominent concern is that consumers don’t actually understand the meaning behind some of the labeling and lose out on the ability to make informed choices since they don’t take the time to research a label that may be meaningless or redundant. In particular, some people working in the animal product industries, such as dairy, beef and pork, are concerned that misleading labels will make brands that don’t spend excess money on labeling lose sales (Messer, et al., 2015).

Information on FOP labels could easily mislead a consumer into believing there is a benefit or risk to a particular brand over neighboring brands when there is not (Alhakami & Slovic, 1994). Almost all regular bacon available at grocers is gluten free, except in rare instances when gluten may be present in seasoning applied (Anderson, 2017). On the whole, someone who doesn’t suffer from celiac disease or a diagnosed gluten sensitivity would not necessarily need to take extra precautions to find bacon that explicitly states “gluten free.” If most bacon is gluten free, why then would a package of bacon have a “gluten-free” label (See Figure 1)? Of those Americans seeking out gluten-free products, around 88 percent are doing so for dietary or health reasons, as opposed to disease or allergy precautions (Reilly, 2016). To agriculture and livestock associations, these dietary or environmental trends can have a significant effect on sales and the strategies necessary to compete in the marketplace (NRDC, 2017).

-

Figure 1. Oscar Mayer’s “Select Natural’s” brand includes “Gluten Free” FOP labeling.

If some of today’s FOP labels are misleading or even superfluous, how does that influence the perceptions consumers have of the brand, especially when compared to similar brands with fewer or no additional labels? This study begins to explore how voluntary FOP food labeling affects consumer perceptions about the brand, and seeks to understand what ultimately influences their decision-making process.

For this study, over 130 potential participants were screened in order to isolate food-buying decision-makers who normally shop conventional grocers such as grocery stores (Safeway, Aldi, Publix, Cub Foods) or mass retailers (Target, Costco, Walmart), as opposed to organic or natural co-ops and grocers (Whole Foods, Trader Joe’s), and would be willing to participate in an in-depth phone interview. Through a series of open-ended questions about buying habits, opinions and decisions, qualitative data was formed that could help future researchers, food brands and agriculture associations to better understand the consumer brand perceptions in relation to voluntary FOP food labeling. This data includes thoughts and opinions expressed by the interviewees specifically related to the labeling on various food products found in traditional grocery stores.

Limitations within this study include not testing in a real-world shopping environment, and also asking questions that are primarily qualitative in nature, rather than quantitative. Participants were not exposed to these products as they're typically displayed on a store shelf, but as individual product photos positioned next to each other. Due to the nature of the research having qualitative output, the results lack comparative figures to measure. There is no established baseline measurement for future comparison.

Definitions and Acronyms

- brand: product name, if trademarked, or manufacturing company name of product (e.g., Pop-Tarts® or Old Dutch tiny twists pretzels)
- voluntary label: not required by U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) regulations or guidelines
- FOP / Front-of-Package: located on the front of packaging, usually with marketing intent
- CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility

Literature Review

The purpose of the research was to better understand how voluntary front-of-package (FOP) labels on food products influence the consumer perception of the brand. This information will hopefully add depth to the conversation in agriculture marketing and communications circles.

Studies are available that consider how labels, design or advertising can influence consumer purchase or preference, but there remains a lack of research focused on how volunteer FOP food labeling affects a consumer's perception of the brand or company (S.T. Wang, 2013). The intention was not to measure favorability or preference of one product over another, but to gather qualitative feedback on the brand itself based on voluntary label comparisons.

Shift in voluntary FOP labels, specifically toward information regarding nutrition, ingredients, sourcing and quality, has evolved over the last few decades (Messer, et al., 2015). Beyond U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) required labeling, brands have the choice to add promotional labels that may help consumers in their decision-making process (FDA, 2013). There are more FOP labels on foods today than ever before, and companies have historically pushed the FDA for these broad labeling rights (Nestle & Ludwig, 2010). Sometimes, diet trends influence the addition of new labels to the front of packaging. For example, the "gluten free" label, which is now prominently placed on the fronts of some food packaging, was once in small print on the back, and important only to individuals who suffered from gluten allergies or celiac disease (Strawbridge, 2013). Since 2013, a whopping 33 percent of consumers were actively avoiding gluten for the belief that it had negative health effects and actively avoided it in their diets (Watson, 2013). Food companies took heed and followed the consumer lead and made gluten ingredient omission much more prominent.

Ingredient information is just one way that consumers are driving brand marketing. How ingredients are sourced and humane animal living conditions is information brands voluntarily share. Part of this is likely due to companies increasing their Corporate Social Responsibility

(CSR) measures as the trend for accountability, safe manufacturing, and environmental and social concerns is driven by consumers and their purchasing power (Ames, n.d.). For example, some consumers have actively criticized the use of ingredients made from genetically modified organisms (GMOs) or genetically engineered (GE) seeds in food (Wunderlich & Gatto, 2015). This has driven some companies to adopt "GMO free" or "Non-GMO" FOP labels to distinguish their products from others. The FDA is, at the time of this study, taking no action regarding GMO statements on FOP labels as long as the wording is accurate and truthful. The most recent guidelines from the FDA (2015) state:

> Food manufacturers may voluntarily label their foods with information about whether the foods were not produced using bioengineering, as long as such information is truthful and not misleading. In general, an accurate statement about whether a food was not produced using bioengineering is one that provides information in a context that clearly refers to bioengineering technology. Examples of such statements include:
>
> - "Not bioengineered."
> - "Not genetically engineered."
> - "Not genetically modified through the use of modern biotechnology."
> - "We do not use ingredients that were produced using modern biotechnology."
> - "This oil is made from soybeans that were not genetically engineered."
> - "Our corn growers do not plant bioengineered seeds."

Similar to arguments companies have successfully made about the terms “natural” or “all natural,” it’s unlikely the “GMO free” or related labeling will be challenged extensively. In the case of “natural,” the FDA has said this:

> From a food science perspective, it is difficult to define a food product that is ‘natural’ because the food has probably been processed and is no longer the product of the earth. That said, FDA has not developed a definition for use of the term natural or its derivatives. However, the agency has not objected to the use of the term if the food does not contain added color, artificial flavors, or synthetic substances.

The FDA choosing not to define “natural” but only eluding to what it is not, it’s no wonder consumers already find food labeling to be confusing (Dominick, Fullerton & Wang, 2017).

When considering potential research outcomes and communication theory, it was considered that perhaps there would be skepticism involved that would shape participants’ answers, especially if the person perceived the label information to be misleading. Interview answers, however, did not yield many significant opinions or perceptions that could be linked to skepticism.

Low involvement theory could be loosely applied to labels since they are a form of marketing and a consumer learning. Consumers may not have much of a brand opinion because they haven’t previously considered a brand, gotten familiar with the values or even acknowledged any labels beside the name of the product (Krugman, 1966). Labels are trying to communicate in similar ways as advertisements communicate.

However, a study was conducted that explored gain/loss message framing in regards to FOP labeling, specifically with labels featuring messages such as organic, non-GMO and antibiotic-free, (Jeong & Lundy, 2015). Results showed participant recall of product types and product labeling was far stronger than the gain/loss framing messaging. Though the following study did not measure gain/loss messaging specifically, the Jeong and Lundy results support the notion that consumers pay attention to labels and product types more than they might health messages.

The most compelling theory that could make sense for this research is the inverse relationship between perceived risk and perceived benefit. In short, products featuring labels with messages about supposed benefits, including those saying the products are free from “bad” ingredients or include good ones, may make the consumer believe there is a risk involved with foods that do not include these messages (Alhakami & Slovic, 1994). This seems to get at the crux of the gluten-free bacon issue and why the agriculture industry is threatened by the inclusion of extraneous voluntary FOP labels. The gain/loss messaging and perceived risk versus benefit theories are quite similar and there is an argument to say both play a role.

Methodology

In an effort to accurately uncover the nuances in brand perception, this study was conducted using personal in-depth interviews. To find the appropriate subjects for interview, an online screener survey was distributed via various social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn (See Appendix A for full screener).

Screener survey questions included:

1. When it comes to buying groceries for your household, how often are you the primary decision-maker?

2. In the past year, at which stores have you most frequently purchased groceries? (Name three)
3. In what year were you born?
4. Which of the following best describes your job function?
5. If selected, would you be willing to participate in a 10- to 15-minute phone interview?
6. If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, please provide information below so I can reach you.

The purpose of the screener questions was to identify viable candidates for further interview. The ideal candidates for study would be those who make the majority of grocery purchasing decisions, in other words, those who answered "always," "almost always" and "usually" to screener question number one.

For question two, candidates who listed stores that sell mostly or all organic foods as where they most frequently shopped in the past year, as opposed to conventional grocers or mass retailers, were screened out. The reason behind this was because "organic" itself is a voluntarily label, and studying brand perception around foods labeled as "organic" could likely be a study on its own. Organic food labels and mostly organic shoppers were left out of the study in order to create a more neutral, focused and unbiased sample.

The preference for this study was individuals between the ages 21 and 67, or Millennials through Baby Boomers, to establish possible correlations or similarities between generational groups.

To avoid the risk of involving participants with too much knowledge around the subject of labels and brands, people who identified their job functions as being related to marketing, communications or advertising were screened out. The objective was to consider as many people with as few biases or established knowledge of the subject as possible.

Additionally, participants who were known the researcher were screened out as to not invite bias in the answers or recording of information.

The list of viable screened interview candidates totaled 45, and they were contacted via email to request their participation in a phone interview. The screening process took approximately 2 weeks. Ultimately, 14 people completed the phone interviews analyzed to create this research paper. The phone interviews were conducted over a period of 1.5 weeks, and participants were henceforth identified as interviews 1-14.

Once interview times were established, participants were instructed to have a computer or tablet with internet access available to them during the interview call. Approximately 5-10 minutes before the call, a link was sent via email for them to connect via internet to a join.me site where they could view a screen of controlled images, and a phone call was also made to establish an audio connection. In the event the screen-sharing website option was unavailable or didn't work, they were instead sent a Google presentation document, with the assumption they would look at the correct photo page as instructed.

Participants were shown four separate slides featuring photos of three-four brand labels of similar products and were asked the same four questions for each (See Figure 2, Appendix C).

1. Is (product shown) a product you buy for yourself or your household?
    a. (If "yes") When shopping for milk, how do you choose which product to buy?
2. What do you like or dislike about these (products)?
3. What do you think of each brand based on what you see?

4. If you needed to buy (product), and these products were all around the same price, which one would you buy and why?

Figure 2. The first slide shown to participants features three different brands of 2 percent milk.

After the visual portion was complete, participants were then asked two demographic questions: the highest level of school they'd completed and a confirmation of the year they were born. The education level responses were collected with the same intent as the age information: to try to identify any correlation with groups, specifically by highest level of education. Interestingly, there were a large number of participants who had completed a Master's degree (See Figure 3). It is unknown how the sample skewed in that direction.

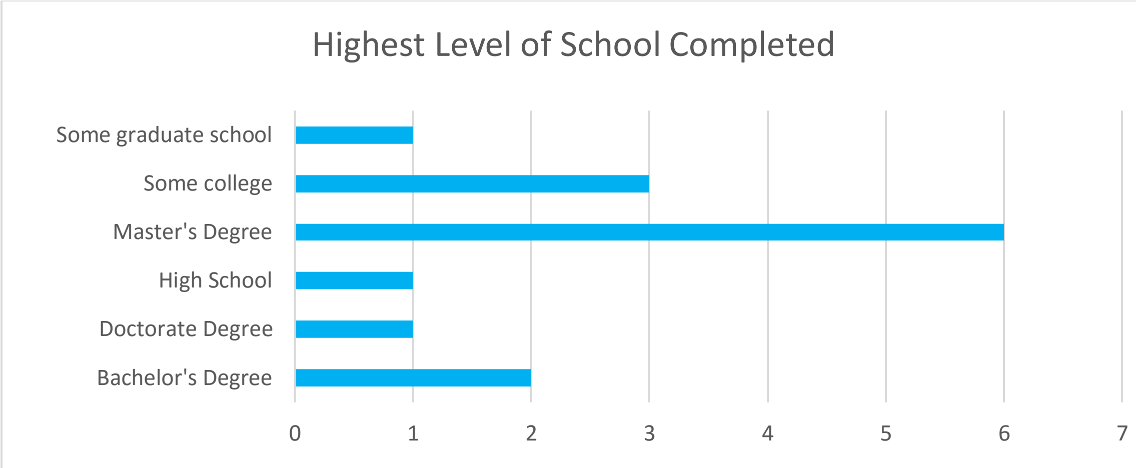

Figure 3. Interview participants skewed heavily toward Master's degree holders.

All participants' answers were recorded to allow for further review and analyzing. Answers were fed into a spreadsheet (Appendix C) with only an interview number as the participant identifier. At the conclusion of the interviews, answers were reviewed to single out comments that were directly related to the brand based on label information. It was important to separate and identify thoughts and feelings that were about the food or labels themselves instead of the actual brand or company. Through this examination and analysis, it was hoped that a clear understanding of brand opinion and perception was brought to light or, conversely, that the labels did not affect the perception of the brand in any way. The questions led participants to consider what these labels ultimately made them think about the brand, but without pushing them or forcing an opinion if they did not really have one.

The food products chosen for review were based on the following factors:

- A minimum of three different brand choices for the same or similar products
- Non-organic
- Available at most traditional grocers
- Found in a variety of spots throughout the store and varied in product type

The final brands:

- Fairlife 2% milk, Kemps Select 2% milk and Sweet Meadows Farms 2% milk
- Market Pantry classic pasta sauce, Ragu classic pasta sauce, Prego classic pasta sauce and Classico classic pasta sauce
- Gold Peak sweet tea, Snapple sweet tea and Pure Leaf sweet tea
- Old Dutch tiny twists pretzels, Rold Gold tiny twists pretzels and Snyder's mini pretzels

The FOP voluntary labels varied from none to several, and the messages on the labels fell into five categories:

- Ingredients
- Quality
- Nutrition
- Source
- Emotional

A content analysis was done to identify the categories of FOP label information (See Figure 4).

	Ingredients	**Quality**	**Nutrition**	**Source**	**Emotional**
Milk	50% less sugar than regular milk Lactose-Free 43% less fat than whole ultra-filtered milk 37% less fat than whole milk	Ultra-Filtered Grade A Pasteurized Homogenized Ultra-Pasteurized	High Quality 13 g Protein Essential 9 Nutrients Vitamins A & D	From cows not treated with rBST Pasture grazed cows No artificial growth hormones	Real Dairy symbol
Pasta Sauce		Our richest, thickest recipe	1-1/2 servings of vegetables per 1/2 cup of sauce		Since 1937
		Smooth & Rich	2 servings of veggies in every 1/2 cup of sauce		*Figure 4.* Inventory of label
			80 calories per 1/2 cup		
			1/2 cup of vegetables per serving - 20% of the daily recommended amount		
Sweet Tea	With real sugar No artificial sweeteners	No preservatives Home brewed taste Real brewed tea Brewed from real leaves	190 Calories per bottle 160 Calories per bottle	Never from powder	The best stuff on earth
Pretzels		Delicious	Fat free	Non GMO Project Verified	Best snack ever baby
			Low fat snack		America's pretzel bakery since 1909

Figure 4. Inventory of content found on products reviewed.

Conclusion

The interview notes of the 14 interviews were examined to find indications of clear brand perception or opinion being influenced by voluntary FOP labels. The interview notes showed less than half the people interviewed were able to consistently articulate their feelings on a brand based on FOP labeling when asked, and even more people had no impressions or perceptions at all (Appendix D). When pressed further, some participants would reiterate what they liked or disliked about the labels, or the meaning of the labels, instead of overall brand impressions. For example, when participant 14 was asked their impression or perception of the brand based on the FOP labels, they replied, “The ones that have vegetable messaging appeals to my desire to be healthy – it cultivates a positive feeling.” That positive feeling could relate back to the brand, but in all likelihood, they’re only referring to the value of the label information presented, not necessarily a qualitative assessment of the brand's intentions or how they might interpret the brand values.

In this research, interviews revealed there are some themes that arise from consumers when considering brands based on FOP food labels: Premium vs. Bargain, Corporate Social Responsibility and Brand Buying.

Premium vs. Bargain

The prices of products shown were not revealed, however, participants were more elaborate and decisive when it came to their perceptions about brands being premium, as in more expensive, or a bargain. Fairlife and Sweat Meadows Farms brands had more design elements and labeling than the Kemps Select brand of 2% milk, and some participants acknowledged that and assumed they were more premium or expensive. Snyder's pretzels had a "Non-GMO" label, which led some to believe the Snyder brand was more expensive, or that the label meant consumers would be paying for an added value. The impressions relating to the assumed prices of the products include:

> Interview 6 (Milk): Fairlife and Sweet Meadows Farms seem premium, but have added value. They're fancier. Select is basic, no frills and cheaper.

> Interview 7 (Milk): Fairlife and Sweet Meadows are more expensive; processing and packaging makes it cost more. Wouldn't seek either one of them out.

> Interview 8 (Pretzels): May be more expensive with Non-GMO label, ingredients may be harder to source.

> Interview 10 (Milk): Fairlife and Sweet Meadows are more expensive. Select is a basic brand.

Interview 13 (Pretzels): Non-GMO labeled products are probably more expensive.

Interview 14 (Pretzels): Non-GMO is trendy; they probably charge extra for that label.

During the pasta sauce interview segment, one of the products was an in-store brand found at Target called Market Pantry. Several of the participants recognized this brand as being Target's brand and noted that it was less expensive compared to the others:

Interview 3: Market Pantry is low-end and cheaper, more basic.

Interview 8: Classico seems higher end.

For a price-sensitive shopper, it would appear that more FOP labeling could dissuade them from even considering a purchase. Fancier packaging and lots of information about ingredient omissions or sourcing could make a consumer immediately overlook the brand, dismissing it due to assumed price.

Another way to look at the premium versus bargain argument is to consider that some brands have good reason to look premium, as it's an inherent characteristic of the brand and one consumers are used to. Snyder's of Hanover, as an example, has a legacy dating back over 100 years, and the GMO label found on the FOP was perceived to be an expensive investment on behalf of the brand, supporting the perception of the premium quality consumers expect.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Due to an increase in ethical consumerism, corporations are placing more resources and time into Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), which has shown to influence consumer's perception of the brand's ethicality and trust (Singh, Iglesias & Batista-Foguet, 2012). When presented with FOP labels featuring CSR-themed statements, such as sourcing of ingredients, sustainability and animal welfare, participants had this to say:

> Interview 1 (Milk): Fairlife makes me think that they treat their animals a little better. Seems like a nice company.
>
> Interview 3 (Milk): Fairlife might treat cows better; seems like a more humane company than the other two.
>
> Interview 8 (Milk): Marketing to make things look like they're special – annoyed by them. Skeptical and less likely to buy it when labeling is stating the obvious to look like it's special – not impressed by this.
>
> Interview 9 (Milk): Sweet Meadows is catering to a specific audience who care about the cows and source of milk.
>
> Interview 10 (Milk): Fairlife and Sweet Meadows are more expensive; Fairer corporate practices.
>
> Interview 12 (Milk): Fairlife and Sweet Meadows Farms have more concerns than just selling milk – animal welfare and human health – makes them feel better about the brands – their concerns are greater than just selling milk. Maybe it's just marketing, but at least they're doing something else that might be semi-altruistic.
>
> Interview 14 (Milk): Sweet Meadows Farms portrayal (cows in an open pasture) is probably not realistic.
>
> Interview 3 (Pretzels): Snyder's takes interest in what the public wants (Non-GMO label)

> Interview 6 (Pretzels): The company (Snyder's) puts work and effort into Non-GMO labeling; there is intention behind it. Purchasing brands that have non-GMO or organic labeling is supporting the cause and beliefs.

> Interview 10 (Pretzels): Non-GMO is a "so what?" Not because I don't care, but because it seems like it's misplaced. I don't understand that there'd be GMOs in pretzels in the first place.

> Interview 11 (Pretzels): Sometimes packaging markets to what they learn from the audience, but then you find out it's a non-thing – unsure if "non-GMO" is a thing in pretzels.

Though not everyone's preference, CSR-based FOP labels didn't seem to be a turn-off to anyone. Those who didn't care about CSR messages either didn't say anything, or acknowledged they had a purpose or were meant for certain people – just not them. This sentiment is reminiscent of the third-person effect, where people believe that others are influenced by marketing messages, but they are immune, (Davidson, 1983). Even though the labels are not helping attract consumers who don't already care about CSR, given the previous theme of Premium vs. Bargain, brands may want to consider the price perception before adopting these FOP labels, unless label supports an established brand history or heritage.

Brand Buying

Whether the impressions of brands that are less expensive are positive or negative is debatable. Some participants noted that several of the products shown they have purchased in the past based solely on price. However, when asked which product they would buy from the choices on screen and why, most said they would purchase based on brand, as opposed to price or nutrition. This “brand buying” group was then split into two different brand purchase decisions groups. The first chose their product on brand practices, beliefs, packaging or labels, and the other based on brand experience or taste (See Figure 5).

Brand practice or beliefs means the participant had a positive brand perception regarding the way the ingredients were sourced, treatment of animals, etc. Some of these perceptions were captured when the participant was asked about brand perception directly. But some revealed their preference based on brand practice or beliefs when asked which brand they would ultimately buy and the reason why they would choose that product over others. Examples include:

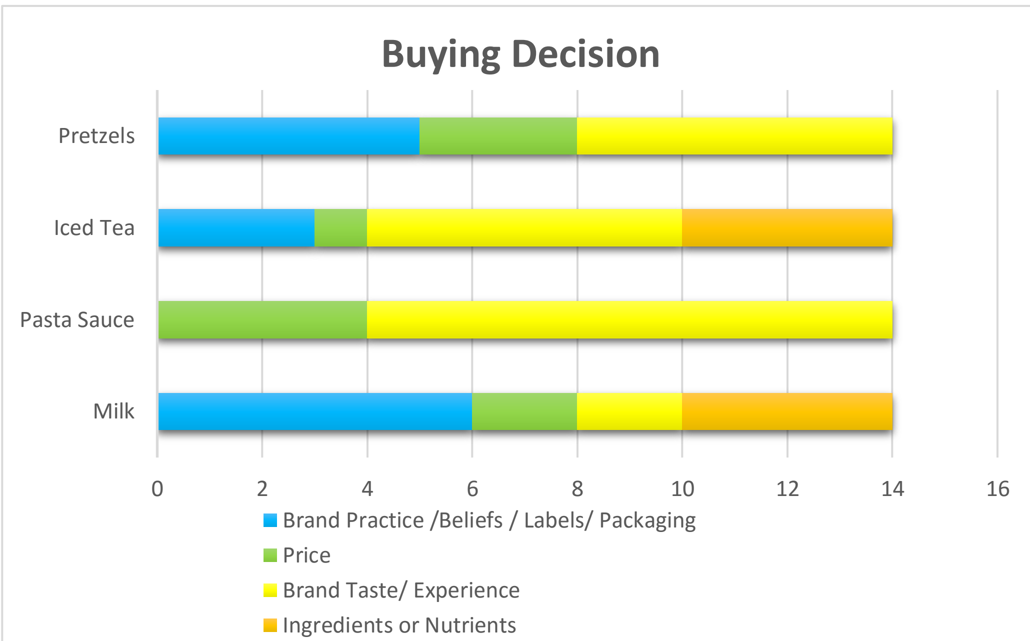

Figure 5. Reason for choosing product over other choices.

Interview 3 (Milk): Fairlife - stands out (packaging); would rather go with a company that treats animals better if it's around the same price.

Interview 6 (Pretzels): Snyder's - non-GMO added value and something extra that's included "voting with my dollars"

> Interview 12 (Milk): Sweet Meadow Farms - it's not that different from Fairlfe, but there's add'l info on the cows which makes me feel better about where it comes from

Brand taste or experience is a previously held perception based on a positive experience with the product, such as liking the taste or knowing the brand by reputation. Some brands with heritage could benefit from this type of buying decisions. As shown in Figure 5, products were most often chosen by brand, in one form or another, over price, ingredients or nutrition. Although this study was not intended to research the purchase decisions of consumers, why people said they would purchase certain brands is an important part of the learnings that could be useful for marketers.

Discussion and Recommendation

Agriculture associations and food brands should not fear too much about rapid or sweeping consumer mindset changes based on voluntary FOP labels, if this study is any indication. The participants were generally not concerned with labeling, and most were not able to elaborate on their brand perceptions based on labels. It is unlikely that voluntary FOP labels are having that great an impact on food brands.

One thing the agriculture industry should keep in mind is, FOP labels are not the only elements that can influence brand perception. Research conducted by S.T. Wang in 2013 indicates that brand perception is shaped in many ways on packaging, not just by labeling:

> Statistical results indicate the significant effects of visual packaging design on perceived product quality and brand preference. Consumers possessing a positive attitude toward visual packaging tend to evaluate the product and brand positively. Based on the findings of this study, food firms should consider visual packaging design as the core for their

> product development. In the current competitive market, food companies should design their product packaging appropriately to generate the high brand preference and emphasize factors such as color, typeface, logo, graphics, and size to gain opportunities for forming positive perceptions, such as product quality, product value, and brand preference. (p. 812)

The recommendation for marketers would be to stay true to the brand and only change voluntary FOP labels if it enhances the brand and is not just to play the “us too” marketing game. Another reminder about excess voluntary FOP labels is they may unwittingly make the brand seem more premium or expensive. If consumers are consistently buying on the basis of price, volunteer FOP labels could do a disservice to a brand that is normally price-competitive.

Future Research

Interaction with participants in this study showed a need to reassess how the term “brand” is used and perhaps first gauge how well the participant understands what is meant by brand. In-depth interview was indeed the most effective way to collect feedback since there is relative freedom to reshape or elaborate on questions to try to focus the participant. Knowing the difficulty in which the participants had appropriately answering the brand perception question, future researchers may find the use of surveys to be insufficient and could result in inaccurate results.

Further research should explore the mix of FOP labeling and organic products, not just traditional ones. This may show differences in brand perception if the consumer is particularly concerned with food products labeled as organic and how voluntary labels can affect that.

References

Alhakami, A. S., & Slovic, P. (1994). A Psychological Study of the Inverse Relationship Between Perceived Risk and Perceived Benefit. *Risk Analysis*, *14*(6), 1085-1096. doi:10.1111/j.1539-6924.1994.tb00080.x

Ames, E. (n.d.). Millennial Demand for Corporate Social Responsibility Drives Change in Brand Strategies. Retrieved from https://www.ama.org/publications/MarketingNews/Pages/millennial-demand-for-social-responsibility-changes-brand-strategies.aspx

Anderson, J. (2017, June 18). Is Bacon Gluten-Free? 6 Gluten-Free Bacon Brands. Retrieved from https://www.verywell.com/gluten-free-bacon-562435

Davison, W. P. (1983). The Third-Person Effect in Communication. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *47*(1), 1. doi:10.1086/268763

Dominick, S. R., Fullerton, C., Olynk Widmar, N. J., & Wang, H. (2017). Consumer Associations with the "All Natural" Food Label. *Journal of Food Products Marketing*, 1-14. doi:10.1080/10454446.2017.1285262

Guidance for Industry: Voluntary Labeling Indicating Whether Foods Have or Have Not Been Derived from Genetically Engineered Plants. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/GuidanceDocumentsRegulatoryInformation/LabelingNutrition/ucm059098.htm

Jeong, Y., & Lundy, L. K. (2015). Evaluating Food Labels and Food Messages: An Experimental Study of the Impact of Message Format and Product Type on Evaluations of Magazine Food Advertisements. *Journal of Applied Communications*, *99*(1). doi:10.4148/1051-0834.1040

Krugman, H. E. (1966). The Measurement of Advertising Involvement. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *30*(4), 583. doi:10.1086/267457

Messer, K. D., Bligh, S., Costanigro, M., & Kaiser, H. M. (2015). Process Labeling of Food: Consumer Behavior, the Agricultural Sector, and Policy Recommendations. *Council for Agricultural Science and Technology*, *56*.

Nestle, M., & Ludwig, D. S. (2010). Front-of-Package Food Labels. *JAMA*, *303*(8), 771. doi:10.1001/jama.2010.179

Newman, C. L., Howlett, E., & Burton, S. (2014). Shopper Response to Front-of-Package Nutrition Labeling Programs: Potential Consumer and Retail Store Benefits. *Journal of Retailing*, *90*(1), 13-26. doi:10.1016/j.jretai.2013.11.001

NRDC. (2017, March). Retrieved from https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/less-beef-less-carbon-ip.pdf

Reilly, N. R. (2016). The Gluten-Free Diet: Recognizing Fact, Fiction, and Fad. *The Journal of Pediatrics*, *175*, 206-210. doi:10.1016/j.jpeds.2016.04.014

Roe, B., & Teisl, M. F. (2007). Genetically modified food labeling: The impacts of message and messenger on consumer perceptions of labels and products. *Food Policy*, *32*(1), 49-66. doi:10.1016/j.foodpol.2005.12.006

Singh, J. J., Iglesias, O., & Batista-Foguet, J. M. (2012). Does Having an Ethical Brand Matter? The Influence of Consumer Perceived Ethicality on Trust, Affect and Loyalty. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *111*(4), 541-549. doi:10.1007/s10551-012-1216-7

S.T. Wang, E. (2013). The influence of visual packaging design on perceived food product quality, value, and brand preference. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, *41*(10), 805-816. doi:10.1108/ijrdm-12-2012-0113

Strawbridge, H. (2013, February 20). Going gluten-free just because? Here's what you need to know - Harvard Health Blog - Harvard Health Publications. Retrieved from http://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/going-gluten-free-just-because-heres-what-you-need-to-know-201302205916

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). (2013, January). Food Labeling Guide. Retrieved from https://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/GuidanceDocumentsRegulatoryInformation/LabelingNutrition/ucm2006828.htm

U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (2015, November). Guidance for Industry: Voluntary Labeling Indicating Whether Foods Have or Have Not Been Derived from Genetically Engineered Plants. Retrieved from https://www.fda.gov/food/guidanceregulation/guidancedocumentsregulatoryinformation/ucm059098.htm

What is the meaning of 'natural' on the label of food? (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.fda.gov/aboutfda/transparency/basics/ucm214868.htm

Wunderlich, S., & Gatto, K. A. (2015). Consumer Perception of Genetically Modified Organisms and Sources of Information. *Advances in Nutrition: An International Review Journal*, *6*(6), 842-851. doi:10.3945/an.115.008870

Appendix A – Participant Screener Survey

Capstone Screener

Graduate Research Study

Hello,

I am a graduate student at the University of Minnesota and am seeking volunteers to assist me with a research study on grocery purchases. If you decide to participate, please indicate at the end of the survey if you'd be willing to do a 10-15 minute follow-up interview via phone. Not all who volunteer for the phone interview will be chosen. All records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I may publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. I greatly appreciate your willingness to help me. If you have any questions, please email me at chap0066@umn.edu

Thank you,

Kate Galloway

1. When it comes to buying groceries for your household, how often are you the primary decision-maker?

2. In the past year, at which stores have you most frequently purchased groceries?

1.

2.

3.

3. In what year were you born? (enter 4-digit birth year; for example, 1976)

4. Which of the following best describes your job function? (Select One)

- Accounting
- Administrative
- Advertising
- Analyst

- Art/Creative/Design
- Business Development
- Communications
- Consulting
- Customer Service
- Distribution
- Education
- Engineering
- Finance
- General Business
- Health Care Provider
- Hospitality
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Legal
- Management
- Manufacturing
- Marketing
- Production
- Product Management
- Project Management
- Public Relations
- Purchasing
- Quality Assurance
- Research
- Sales
- Science
- Stay-at-home parent
- Strategy/Planning
- Supply Chain
- Training
- I am currently not employed
- Other (please specify)

5. If selected, would you be willing to participate in a 10-15 minute phone interview?

- Yes
- No

6. If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, please provide information below so I can reach you.

Name	
Phone number	
Email Address	
Best time of day to reach you	

Appendix B – Interview Guide

Interview Guide

CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS OF BRANDS BASED ON VOLUNTARY FRONT-OF-PACKAGE LABELING ON FOOD PRODUCTS

Kate Galloway | University of Minnesota
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS MASTER OF ARTS | CAPSTONE RESEARCH PROJECT | 2017

Overview

Interviews for this research will be conducted via telephone while the volunteer uses their computer as a visual aid.

Consent

Thank you for agreeing to be part of this phone interview. Before we start, I want to take a minute to review the basics of the consent information you agreed to over email or phone earlier. Today, I will ask you mostly open-ended questions, along with a demographic question. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are free to not answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time, with no harm to your relationship with the University of Minnesota. The information you provide in this survey will be kept private. Only I will have access to the records. Data included in the final report will not include any information that would make it possible to identify you as a study subject. Should you have any questions, please feel free to use the contact information on the consent form provided. This interview will take approximately 10-15 minutes.

I would like to audio record our conversation to help ensure I capture your comments thoroughly and accurately. Your name will not be audio recorded and all of your responses will be anonymous. Do you give consent for me to audio record our conversation?

Instructions

For this interview, I will be showing you a series of food product images and asking you some questions related to them. I would like to remind you that there are no right or wrong answers in this interview. I am very interested in knowing what you think, so please feel free to be frank and to share your point of view. It is very important that I hear your opinion.

Questions (Images of 3-4 different brands of milk, pasta sauce, iced tea and pretzels)

First, we are looking at milk. (Four brands, all 2% cow's milk.)

1. Is milk a product you buy for yourself or your household?
    a. (If "yes") When shopping for milk, how do you choose which product to buy?
2. What do you like or dislike about these cartons of milk?
3. What do you think of each brand based on what you see?
4. If you needed to buy milk, and these products were all around the same price, which one would you buy and why?

Next, we are looking at pasta sauce. (Three brands, all "classic" tomato.)

1. Is pasta sauce a product you buy for yourself or your household?
    a. (If "yes") When shopping for pasta sauce, how do you choose which product to buy?
2. What do you like or dislike about these jars of pasta sauce?
3. What do you think of each brand based on what you see?
4. If you needed to buy pasta sauce, and these products were all around the same price, which one would you buy and why?

Next, we are looking at iced tea. (Three brands of individual iced tea bottles, all sweet tea.)

1. Is iced tea a product you buy for yourself or your household?

   a. (If "yes") When shopping for iced tea, how do you choose which product to buy?

2. What do you like or dislike about these bottles of iced tea?
3. What do you think of each brand based on what you see?
4. If you needed to buy iced tea, and these products were all around the same price, which one would you buy and why?

Finally, we are looking at pretzels. (Three brands, all "mini" or "twist" variety.)

1. Are pretzels a product you buy for yourself or your household?
   a. (If "yes") When shopping for pretzels, how do you choose which product to buy?
2. What do you like or dislike about these bags of pretzels?
3. What do you think of each brand based on what you see?
4. If you needed to buy pretzels, and these products were all around the same price, which one would you buy and why?

Demographic Questions

Thank you for your participation in this interview. I just have one more question I'd like to ask.

What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? *If currently enrolled, highest degree received.*

- Some high school, no diploma
- High school graduate, diploma or the equivalent (for example: GED)
- Some college credit, no degree

- Trade/technical/vocational training
- Associate degree
- Bachelor’s degree
- Master’s degree
- Professional degree
- Doctorate degree

Closing

Thank you again for your participation in my survey. I appreciate your willingness to take time out of your day to help me, and am thankful for your insightful answers.

Appendix C – Interview Slides

Welcome!

Thank you for participating


fa!rlife
LESS 50% SUGAR than regular milk
HIGH QUALITY 13g PROTEIN per serving
ESSENTIAL 9 NUTRIENTS
2% REDUCED FAT
ultra-filtered milk
FROM COWS NOT TREATED WITH rBST
LACTOSE FREE
52 FL OZ (1.5L)


Nutrition Facts
Select
2% Reduced Fat Milk
Grade A Pasteurized
Homogenized


SWEET MEADOWS
FARMS
Milk From Certified
Pasture Grazed Cows
NO ARTIFICIAL GROWTH HORMONES
2% Reduced Fat Milk
37% LESS FAT THAN WHOLE MILK
GRADE A • ULTRA-PASTEURIZED
HOMOGENIZED • VITAMINS A & D
HALF GALLON (1.89L)


MARKET
PANTRY
1½ SERVINGS OF VEGETABLES
TRADITIONAL
PASTA SAUCE
70


OUR Richest, Thickest RECIPE!
2 SERVINGS OF VEGGIES
Old World Style
RAGÚ
80
Traditional
Since 1937


Prego
ITALIAN SAUCE
Traditional
NET WT. 24 OZ. (1 LB 8 OZ) 680g


SMOOTH & RICH
CLASSICO
FAMILY
FAVORITES™
TRADITIONAL
PASTA SAUCE
NET WT 24 OZ
(1 LB 8 OZ) 680g


GOLD
PEAK
TEA
SWEET TEA
WITH REAL SUGAR
NO PRESERVATIVES
190
18.5 FL OZ


REAL BREWED TEA
SWEET TEA
PURE
LEAF
BREWED
FROM REAL
LEAVES
160
CALORIES
PER BOTTLE
18.5 FL OZ (1.15 PT) 547 mL


ALL NATURAL
Snapple
SWEET
STRAIGHT
UP
TEA


Old Dutch
TINY TWISTS
DELICIOUS LOW FAT SNACK
NET WT. 15 OZ. (425.2g)
ROLD GOLD
Pretzels
tiny twists
Original
fat free
SNYDER'S
OF HANOVER
FAMILY SIZE!
16 OZ. VALUE!
Mini
Pretzels
NON GMO Project VERIFIED
Fat Free
BEST SNACK EVER BABY!

Appendix D – Interview Answers

Interview Number	Year Born	Highest Level of Education	Do you buy milk for you or your household?	How do you choose which milk to buy?	Milk label likes	Milk label dislikes	Milk Brand Impressions - Positive	Milk Brand Impressions - Negative	Which milk would you buy and why?
1	1991	Master's Degree	Yes	Buy almond milk	Fairlife is easy to read Likes that it provides numbers Looks modern		**Fairlife makes me think that they treat their animals a little bit better. Seems like a nice company.**		Fairlife: Likes how it looks, easy to read, seems like a nice company
2	1982	High School	Yes	Price	Fairlife - simplicity, likes information on the front; is what she's looking for; calories, protein, etc.	Sweet Meadows doesn't have the nutrition info on the front			If price were similar, then Fairlife due to protein content
3	1975	Doctorate	Yes	Price	Fairlife image	Content on Fairlife - doesn't sway her	**Fairlife might treat cows better, seems like a more humane company than the other two**		Fairlife - stands out (packaging), would rather go with a company that treats animals better if it's around the same price
4	1953	Some college	Yes	Price					Select - recognized brand
5	1969	Bachelor's	Yes	Family choice	Fairlife and Select provide most information Fairlife shows sugar, protein and type of milk				Select - husband's taste
6	1989	Master's Degree	No		Sweet Meadows and Fairlife - likes cow imagery, feels these brands treat cows better		**Fairlife and Sweet Meadows - premium but have added value, fancier Fairlife - aimed at a hipper crowd, trendy Sweet Meadows - seems more wholesome**	**Select - basic, no frills, cheaper**	Fairlife - lactose free
7	1951	Master's Degree	Yes	When milk is needed	Sugar information on Fairlife;	Fairlife cow image is silly and juvenile; no idea what the hormones are The Select one looks like the back of the carton Some things that concern others don't concern me		Fairlife and Sweet Meadows are more expensive; processing and packaging makes it cost more; wouldn't seek either one of them out; Fairlife might be something important for my grandkids, but not me **Fancier packaging means the brands are more expensive**	Select - general, no nonsense, has details I want to know
8	1965	Some college	Yes	Price usually	Fairlife: non-hormone	Fairlife has 50% less sugar, which means it's more processed and more expensive; are the nutrients added? Select: Real Dairy symbol Sweet Meadows: Skeptical about claims made on label	**Select - doesn't make claims you have to research**	**Marketing to make things look like they're special - she's annoyed by them. She's skeptical and less likely to buy it when labeling is stating the obvious to look like it's special or sharing something she's not impressed by**	Select - wants to pay for milk, not marketing
9	1974	Master's Degree	yes	Price and expiration	Fairlife - it's clear; likes the high protein information; easy to read	Artificial hormone - not concerned with it; messages that talk more about the cows than the ingredients and nutrition Does not like the Select front label at all	**Sweet Meadows is catering to a specific audience who care about the cows and source of milk Fairlife caters to people interested in the content of the milk Select is for people who look for labels Reflect company's values**		Fairlife - the nutritional information is important - higher levels of protein
10	1984	Some graduate	Yes	Price	No growth hormones; on Fairlife, less sugar info is good; More labeling is better	Select (compared to others) doesn't probably cows as well as the others; **overall, some labels make you think less of other brands**	**Fairlife and Sweet Meadows are more expensive; Fairer corporate practices**	Select is a basic brand	Select - price based
11	1974	Some College	Yes		No artificial growth hormones; fat content is ok;	Would never purchase Select		**Fairlife and Sweet Meadow Farms doesn't give all the straight information on the front**	Sweet Meadow Farms - the growth hormone information
12	1990	Master's Degree	Yes	Price, Health/Environmental concerns	Fairlife is contemporary so it appeals to her; the name makes it seems like there's something else going on - definitely has purchased and will again Sweet Meadow - the cover art is nice - cows are spread out, pasture grazed, no growth hormones - all appealing	Select is cheapest, but nothing else is appealing	**Fairlife and SMF has more concerns than just selling milk - animal welfare and human health - makes me feel better about the brands - their concerns are greater than just selling milk. Maybe it's just marketing, but at least they're doing something else that might be semi-altruistic**	**Select just concerned with selling milk**	Sweet Meadow Farms - it's not that different from Fairlife, but there's add'l info on the cows which makes me feel better about where it comes from
13	1975	Bachelor's	Yes	Lactose free, whatever is on sale	Fairlife - has a lot more the "good for you" components SMF is the most graphically appealing		SMF - likes the graphics	**Does not think he has any opinions related back to the company or brand He only really cares about comparing labels on back**	Fairlife - lactose free
14	1979	Master's Degree	Yes	Expiration Date	Free-range cows (SMF)	Packaging that's clear/less recyclable		**SMF portrayal is probably not realistic**	Fairlife - because it's white plastic and probably has the longest shelf life

Interview Number	Year Born	Highest Level of Education	Do you buy pasta sauce for you or your household?	How do you choose which pasta sauce to buy?	Pasta sauce label likes	Pasta sauce label dislikes	Pasta Brand Impression - Positive	Pasta Brand Impression - Negative	Which pasta sauce would you buy and why?
1	1991	Master's Degree	Yes	Taste	Prego and Classico looks more Italian "Smooth and Rich" on the Classico	Ragu looks like a comic and less formal	Ragu is less expensive		Classico - has had good experience with products
2	1982	High School	Yes	Price and flavor	Prego = fresh veggies that show what's in it (visual cues are good)	No sugar information on any Tomatoes on Ragu is not necessarily helpful			Prego or Classico - taste and/or price
3	1975	Doctorate	Yes	Brand and flavor	Classico image - looks rustic and Italian (authentic)			**Market Pantry is low-end and cheaper, more basic**	Prego - brand and flavor
4	1953	Some college							Ragu - brand
5	1969	Bachelor's	Yes	Price and flavor	Ragu - more information on label	Prego seems to have least amount on information			Ragu - taste
6	1989	Master's Degree	Yes	Least added ingredients (salt and sugar) and price		Ragu almost has too much information	**Prego feels like it has whole ingredients**	**Ragu is trying to market to the consumer - trying to jazz up their label with to much stuff. Seems junky.**	Market Pantry - cheapest Prego - seems more traditional
7	1951	Master's Degree	Yes	Brand and price	Ragu - household name, been around for a long time, has servings of veggies on it Market Pantry has nutritional information	Classico is too busy, too many fonts, colors, borders			Ragu - reputation, brand loyalty
8	1965	Some college	Yes	Looks for non-dairy; no HFCS	Vegetable servings is helpful; texture message is helpful		**Classico seems higher end**		Classico - taste and texture
9	1974	Master's Degree	Yes	Taste	Ragu - colors, bright and cheery, more appetizing	Doesn't care about calories of different brands	**Ragu - since 1937 - it's an important part of how they're setting themselves apart.**	**When a company has one opportunity to grab their attention, it shows you clearly what their values are - interviewee does not care about brand values - too busy being a single mom with a 13 year old**	Prego "we are a Prego family"
10	1984	Some graduate	Yes	Least sugar; price	Like additional information about vegetable servings		**Thinks that they care when they put labeling on the front; seems like they're not hiding anything; Likes that they put information front and center**		Classico - taste
11	1974	Some College	Yes	**Buys Paul Newman's because of the non-profits donation**	Market Pantry looks like the grocery brand, so it would be a good price The veggies servings on the packages		None	None	Market Pantry - more cost effective; or Classico for taste or flavor
12	1990	Master's Degree	Yes	Price	The look of the Classico - looks very Tuscan - what I associate with good pasta, more authentic; 1/2 cup of vegetable is appealing	Comparing the veggies messaging is confusing Prego has the least amount of info	**The ones that have vegetable messaging appeals to desire to be healthy - cultivates a positive feeling**		Market Pantry, price; Classico if the price were all the same
13	1975	Bachelor's	No		Likes green on labels				Classico or Ragu
14	1979	Master's Degree	Yes	Brand Loyalty Newman's Own corporate branding since they are a charity	Classico - imagery is different enough to stand out	Ragu label is too loud - too many graphics			Classico - brand used for other products

Do you buy iced tea for you or your household?	How do you choose which iced tea to buy?	Iced tea label likes	Iced tea label dislikes	Iced Tea Brand Impressions - Positive	Iced Tea Brand Impressions - Negative	Which iced tea would you buy and why?
Not usually		Nature scene on Gold Peak and Pure Leaf Likes the "no artificial sweeteners" Prefers the real sugar Calorie info on the front		**Snapple is well-known - likes the products and they say "all natural" Nature scene makes them seem like they get ingredients from clean sources**		Pure Leaf - No artificial sweeteners and has lowest calories
No		Listing calories is good - Gold Peak and Pure Leaf	Snapple packaging			Gold Peak - Boasts real sugar and no preservatives
No		Pure Leaf - Zen feel with the image		**Pure Leaf - more expensive and premium**		Snapple - brand
Yes	Taste	Pure Leaf - logo is appealing and serene				Pure Leaf - likes brand
Yes	Picked one of two options	More information - two have a lot (Gold Peak and Pure Leaf)	Snapple doesn't have much information			Gold Peak - provide information; familiar with brand from the store
Yes	Least added sugar	Likes the new Snapple label - the all natural label Real sugar label Brewed from real tea leaves		**Feel like giving Snapple another chance due to label**		Pure Leaf - likes that it says it's brewed from real leaves
No		Calorie labeling How it's brewed (like coffee, would want real, not instant)	Snapple - no information at all Gold Peak - home brewed taste could mean it's made from powder	**Pure Leaf - seems best**	**Don't think much of the Gold Peak at all**	Pure Leaf - Has the necessary info
No		Gold Peak - likes it's real sugar (not artificial) Pure Leaf - like the brewed from real tea leaves Claims seemed verifiable	Brewed from real leaves may not be verifiable			The lowest price
No		All of them - very enticing and inviting The calories listed on the bottle Tea leaf on Pure Leaf	Snapple is really plain, no information on what sweetens the tea		Hope the tea matches the straight, plain label of Snapple	Pure Leaf - mom buys it
No		Calorie labeling; sugar info; preservative info		Product benefits good		Pure Leaf
No		Real sugar message, but it has more calories Sugar content is a bigger piece of info than the calories to me Brewed for real leaves	Taste like home brewed - doesn't know what that really means	**They're being honest - they have sugar content**		Pure Leaf - has a few lower calories; not from powder; but doesn't like the sugar content on the front
No		Gold Peak is least confusing - no sugar, no preservatives	A lot of the labels are confusing Pure Leaf says 'brewed from real leaves' what else would it be? Snapple seems like the "straight up tea" is confusing since it also says it has plenty of sweetness which means it has a lot of sugar	**Gold Peak is the least manipulative advertising**	**Others seem kind of confusing, which makes me think I'm being manipulated**	Gold Peak - seems the most explicit about what's going on, but it does have more calories, but you know where they're coming from
Yes	Snapple or local brand		Snapple is not as eye-catching			Snapple
No		Pure Leaf - real tea leaves Gold Peak is the higher end of price point - looks like they've invested more money in the design of their label	Gold Leaf has too much going on with their label	**Gold Peak is more premium**	**Doesn't let labels concern him in terms of FOP messaging; Yes, they're in compliance, but not really. Don't know if I take issue of it.**	Snapple or Pure Leaf

Do you buy pretzels for you or your household?	How do you choose which pretzels to buy?	Pretzel label likes	Pretzel label dislikes	Pretzels Brand Impressions - Positive	Pretzels Brand Impressions - Negative	Which pretzels would you buy and why?
Yes			Fat free (has heard it's not good to go fat free since it probably contains other ingredients	**Snyder's seems like a fun brand "Best snack ever baby"**		Would buy Old Dutch - has had them and likes them, and says low fat vs fat free
Yes	Buys rods for snacks Buys from Aldi	Snyder's - visually appealing	Not a lot of nutritional information on any			Snyder's (if around same price) also like non-GMO, but will only buy that way if the price is right
Yes	Depends on purpose - baking vs snacking (would be cheapest or by texture)	Snyder's non-GMO		**Snyder's takes interest in what public wants**		Snyder's non-GMO; brand familiarity
Yes	Brand	Old Dutch - can see pretzels better				Old Dutch - brand, taste
Yes	Taste	Old Dutch - has the most information				Old Dutch - brand
Yes	Price	Rold Gold seems less cluttered Interested in knowing/reading the non-GMO label on Snyder	Snyder's - too much on the label, "Best Snack Ever Baby" label	**Company puts work and effort into non-GMO labeling; intention behind it; Purchasing brands that have non-GMO or organic labeling is supporting the cause and beliefs**	**Brands that don't have GMO labels might have GMOs and/or haven't been certified**	Snyder's - non-GMO added value and something extra that's included "voting with my dollars"
Yes	Price	Old Dutch and Rold Gold are no nonsense Old Dutch you can see more of the product	Non-GMO is not important to me, but might be to another consumer	**Companies who put a lot of information out there have a niche and are trying to reach the individuals who buy in that category**		Old Dutch - no nonsense
Yes	Price	Likes Old Dutch since it's a MN company	Non-GMO is not important to me, but might be to another consumer Don't care about low-fat or no fat		**May be more expensive with Non-GMO label; ingredients may be harder to source**	Whichever was on sale
Yes	Price	Plain labeling/packaging - Old Dutch and Rold Gold	Snyder's - too busy "Best Snack Ever" - skeptical of this	Old Dutch name is known to her	**Brands are a part of the thing that they're trying to sell**	Old Dutch - name recognition, labeling, packaging, freshness
Yes	Price		Non-GMO labeling is surprising - didn't know that was something to be concerned about with pretzels; confused by what it means		**Non-GMO is a "so what"? Not because she doesn't care but because it seems like it's misplaced (doesn't understand that there'd be GMOs in pretzels in the first place)**	Rold Gold - known brand; taste
Yes	Price	Non-GMO label	No sodium content listed	Always thought they were higher quality (Snyder's), and the Non-GMO	**Sometimes packaging markets to what they learn from audience, but then you find out it's a non-thing - unsure if "non-GMO" is a thing in pretzels**	Whatever is on sale
Yes	Price, look tasty	Snyder's pretzels look a little "meatier"	Confused by what makes 2 of them fat free - what did they add to make it that way? If I'm seeing two different things I'm wondering - what's the difference Don't care about the non-GMO message	Snyder's commercials are funny - and their packaging doesn't look at old like Old Dutch	**Non-GMO doesn't influence me… neutral effect toward the brand**	Snyder's as long as their wasn't anything weird on the back nutrition wise
Yes	Variety	Likes the Old Dutch look	Doesn't really pay attention to non-GMO labels		**Non-GMO labeled products are probably more expensive Pretzels are just a snack food - I only care about sodium and taste**	Old Dutch just to try
Yes	Impulse	non-GMO sways him slightly	Snyder's is too loud; Stands out with green; "Best Snack Ever" dislike; "Trendy" non-GMO; fat-free		**Non-GMO is trendy; probably charge extra for that label**	Snyder's - same everywhere I go